



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

On August 29, 2013, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Deputy Superintendent, Carol Wolenberg, disseminated a clarifying memo regarding Appropriate Use of Federal Funds in Providing Food at Conferences and Meetings. The link to that memo and supporting materials is:  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FAQ\\_CT\\_SD\\_432413\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FAQ_CT_SD_432413_7.pdf)

ISD/ESA staff responsible for oversight and management of the RAG grants may note that the memo and the associated documents referenced do not prohibit the use of federal funds for food at professional development conferences, training, and workshops implemented in accordance with MDE-approved grant work-plans and budgets. However, subgrantees must carefully and consistently document the rationale for why food is a necessary component to implement the approved professional development and training in order to effectively disseminate the technical assistance, training and information. Costs must be documented as reasonable.

The MI Excel, SSoS staff recommend that documentation include an agenda and notes supporting the occurrence of a "working lunch," or evening meal, specific to the training and information disseminated to attendees and that this documentation is maintained along with the business and program records. The food and beverages served must be essential to the continuity of the implementation of the professional development event to ensure efficient and cost effective delivery of content, and maximize the engagement of attendees at the event.

The MI Excel, SSoS staff do not see a reasonable justification for use of federal funds for payment of breakfast items. Unless the technical assistance or professional development event starts late in the day, and goes into the evening hours, there appears little justification for serving supper to attendees. If lunch or supper is provided to support professional development, engagement and participation of attendees, we urge that the justification for any food service include documentation of the working session, lecture, or address, which supports the working nature of the event, including meal time. We recommend that the documentation include copies of printed or electronic programs, agendas, minutes, and notes about the meal-time sessions, as well as the entire program presented. Maintain this documentation along with program and business records for potential review by the MDE, external auditors, and the United States Department of Education, if requested. You may direct any questions to Greg Olszta at 517-241-4715, or [olsztag@michigan.gov](mailto:olsztag@michigan.gov).

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